



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE CORNICE OF THE TEMPLE OF ATHENA NIKE

MONSIEUR H. DAUMET, in *Fragments d'Architecture Antique*, Plates 5, 7, and 8, assigns to the temple of Athena Nike at Athens a cornice which I believe I have identified as the raking cornice of the north portico of the Erechtheum. A glance at M. Daumet's wonderful drawings gives one an impression that the cornice (excluding the cyma), both in its height and in the scale of its mouldings, overpowers the members below; and it will also be noted that the mouldings of this cornice are the only carved members on the whole temple,¹ an incongruity hardly admissible in good Greek work. Now it would be difficult to find a more popular book in architectural offices than this volume of restorations by the Pensionnaires of the Academy of France in Rome, and it was therefore largely in defence of the delicate feeling for proportions and for harmonious combination of mouldings displayed by the Greek architects at the time of the erection of the temple of Athena Nike that I looked over the various publications of the temple² to see if authorities agreed in the matter of the cornice. I found that they did agree, but I did not find any proofs that the original cornice had been identified. Then I made a careful examination of the frieze blocks of the temple itself and of the various cornices still extant on the Acropolis, with the result that a heavy inharmonious cornice can surely no longer be assigned to a temple perfected in all other details with so much care.

¹ Except the customary egg-and-dart moulding between the shaft and the capital.

² The chief ones are those of Le Bas, Bötticher, and Durm. See Frazer's *Pausanias's Description of Greece*, Vol. II, p. 261, for a comprehensive set of references.

What facts concerning the cornice blocks were to be gathered from the tops of the frieze blocks? Could some cornice block be proved to have rested on these frieze blocks? If so, could the cyma be determined in its turn from the tops of the cornice blocks, and the question of the acroteria and the pediment sculptures settled? These were the questions to be considered.

It will be remembered that in 1835-36 the various parts of the temple were found buried in a Turkish bastion, removed and set together; but this reconstruction included only a portion of the frieze blocks and none of the cornice blocks. It could hardly have been for lack of material that the restorers did not put M. Daumet's cornice in place, for there are to-day at least four metres of this cornice lying on the Acropolis. Perhaps the restorers could find no absolute proof that it belonged to the temple. Indeed, as already suggested, there is ample proof that this particular cornice belonged to the north portico of the Erechtheum, the proofs, briefly stated, being as follows:

Since the reconstruction of the Erechtheum in 1905, it has been an easy matter to ascertain three important facts concerning the cornice which ran over the pediment of the north portico. First, the start of the raking cornice, for the distance of some 30 cm. is cut on the angle horizontal cornice blocks. This establishes the fact that the nose of the raking cornice was decorated with a carved egg and dart, and this I found by comparison to be identical with the egg and dart on M. Daumet's cornice. Second, two of the ancient pediment stones of the north portico are now in their original places, whereby the projection of the raking cornice can be accurately measured. This projection agrees with that given by M. Daumet. Third, the height of the pediment stones, their inclination, and the length of the horizontal cornice under the pediment give us a means of calculating the thickness of the raking cornice—a thickness which again agrees with that of the cornice assigned by M. Daumet to the Nike temple. Therefore it would seem safe to say that the cornice belongs not to the temple of Athena Nike, but to the Erechtheum.

To return to the Nike temple, what data can be gathered from the various cuttings in the tops of the frieze blocks?

Some of these blocks, decorated with beautiful figures carved in high relief, are now in the British Museum. The arrangement of those in Athens and the dowel and pry holes used in

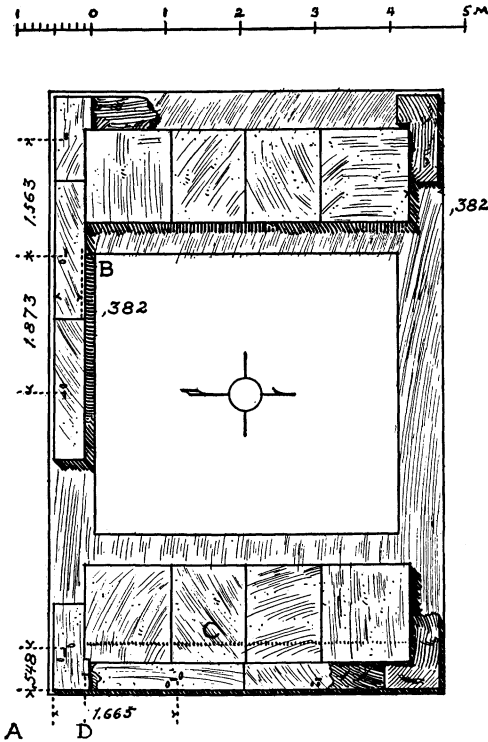


FIGURE 1.—PLAN OF FRIEZE BLOCKS.

connection with the cornice blocks are represented in Figure 1: the relative positions of the blocks at corner *A* seem to be correct, thanks to the sculptures on their faces and the cuttings for the cramp connecting them: the cramp cuttings of the blocks along the south side also seem to fit correctly. The dowels which held the cornice block at *A* show us that the block rested 1.665 m. along the east face of the frieze and 0.548 m. along the south face, there being one dowel at the north end and another on the west side near the south end. It should be borne in mind that there is a play of from 1 cm. to 2 cm. in these dimensions. The pry holes are confusing here, but, in accordance with the general practice of the times, which demanded that the corner stone be laid for greater security before the other stones of the course, the dimensions of the stone should be as here indicated.¹ The side cornice had a minimum length of 1.563 m. and overlapped the frieze block 0.382 m., as shown by a difference of finish at *B*; the dowels and pry holes explain themselves.

¹ At *D* is a curious cutting not deep enough for a dowel. It has the appearance of a half-worked cutting for a cramp.

Now, can we find a cornice which will comply with the requirements demanded both for the front and the side? Figure

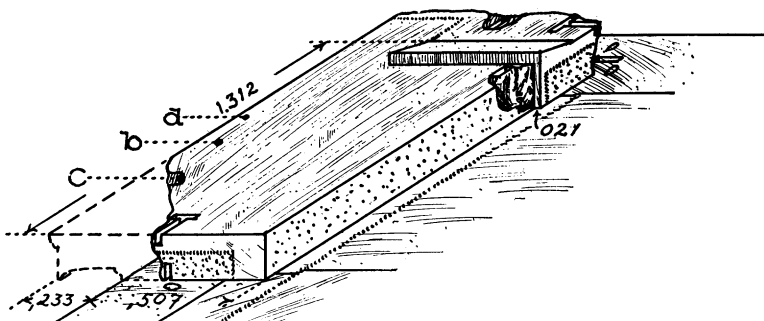


FIGURE 2. — CORNICE BLOCK ; ANGLE.

2 represents a cornice block with the start of a pediment cut on it. It is therefore a cornice block from an angle. Its width

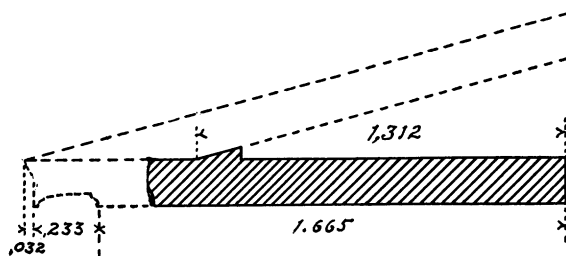


FIGURE 3. — CORNICE BLOCK ; ANGLE.

is that required for the cornice block at A, Figure 1. Unfortunately the farther end is gone, but we may find its original length by calculation, as shown in Figure 3, supposing the raking cornice to be certainly no thicker than the horizontal cornice, and using a slope (see Figure 7) given by one of the cyma blocks that belong with this cornice (as will be explained hereafter). Comparing Figures 3 and 1, it will be seen that we now have the right length of

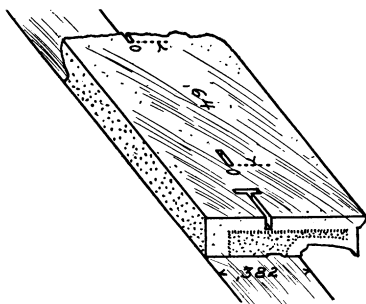


FIGURE 4. — CORNICE BLOCK ; SIDE.

block to fit at *A* (Fig. 1). Further, this block has at its north end but one dowel cutting, which coincides with the

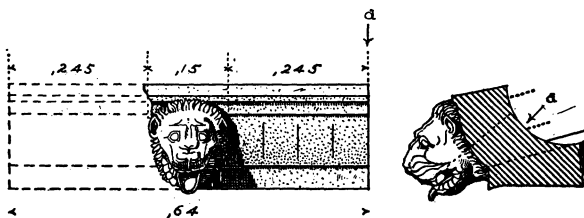


FIGURE 5. — CYMA.

dowel cutting in the frieze block as nearly as can be determined by measurement. The west portion of the cornice block, which

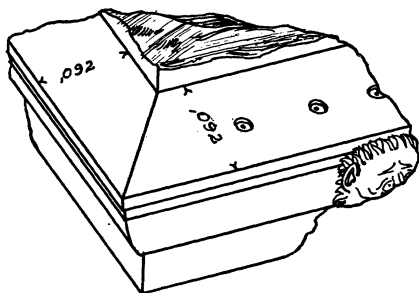


FIGURE 6. — FRAGMENT OF CYMA; ANGLE.

should have a dowel cutting, is gone. The width of the cornice blocks under the pediment was constant, as the dressing of the upper surface of the coffer blocks (Fig. 1, *C*) shows, and it will be noted that the block represented in Figure 2 fulfils this requirement.

Figure 4 represents another block from this same cornice, with a width too narrow to go under the pediment; its width corresponds to that required along the side. The block is broken away at one end, so that its original length may have been considerably greater. There is a second block

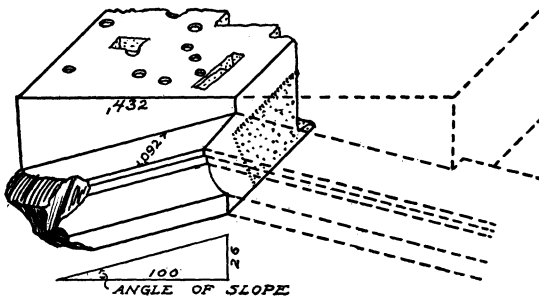


FIGURE 7. — FRAGMENT OF CYMA; APEX.

similar to this and of about the same length. As neither block has a dowel cutting in its preserved end, each could have been

dowelled to the frieze at one end only; this is in agreement with the cuttings in the frieze blocks. These cornice blocks, then, may well have come from the side of the temple.

Our cornice is considerably less high¹ than M. Daumet's and it has no carved mouldings. The workmanship is of the very best and the sizes of the cuttings for dowels and cramps agree with those of the rest of the building—features which in themselves are significant.

We have, then, a cornice, one block of which fits in length and width at the southeast corner of the temple, another block

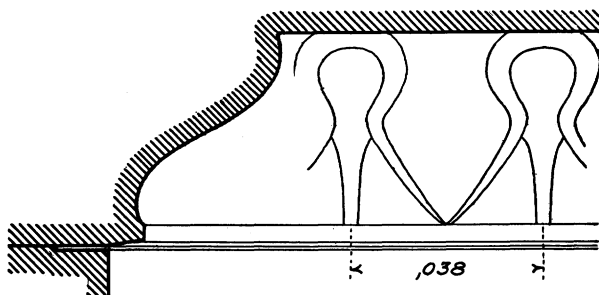


FIGURE 8.—PATTERN ON MOULDING.

from the side with the proper width; both blocks with cramps, dowels, and workmanship as called for, and with mouldings in excellent scale and harmony with the other parts of the temple.

As for the cyma blocks, the dowel cuttings in the top surface of the side cornice block, Figure 4, show that their length was 0.64 m. The cyma blocks which have always been attributed to the temple² are just this in length, and their workmanship is of the best; see Figure 5. The weather marks at *a* show that the cover tile was of the inverted *V* type, 22 cm. wide, and that there was no antefix between the lions' heads. Figure 6

¹ A simple calculation gives 0.17 m. as the height of a cornice which would have the same proportion to the frieze and architrave below as is found in the entablature of the north portico of the Erechtheum. M. Daumet's cornice measures 0.244 m., ours 0.16 m.

² The blocks of the cornice assigned by M. Daumet to this temple show no traces of dowels or other significant marks. Apparently there was no proof that the cyma blocks rested on this cornice, and it seems, therefore, likely that the cornice itself was assigned to the temple without sufficient proof. In fact, the cornice exists only in fragments, and no dowel holes are preserved in their under surfaces.

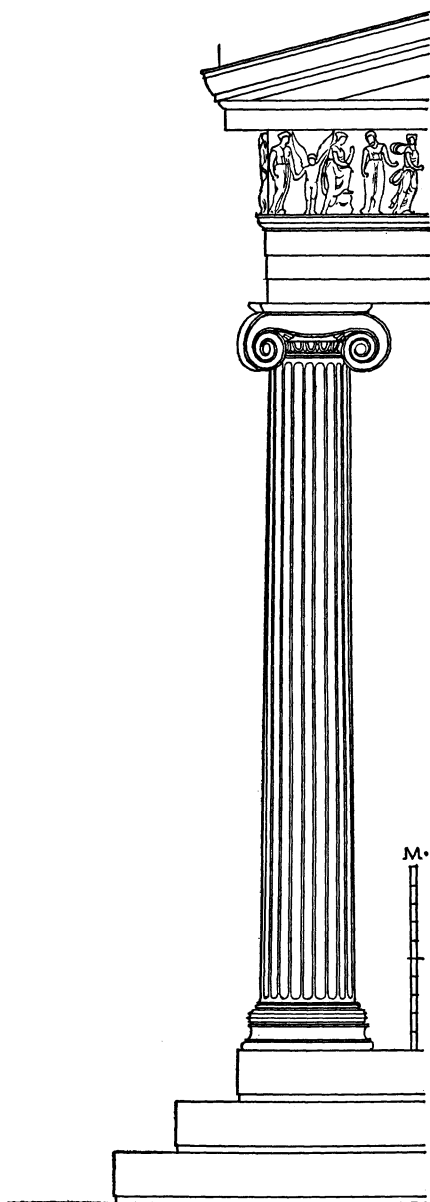


FIGURE 9.—THE ORDER WITH CORNICE.

represents a fragment of the cyma from one of the angles, and Figure 7 a fragment from one of the apices: it will be noticed that both these pieces have cuttings for acroteria of some sort.

Let us return to Figure 2 for a moment. Traces of three bronze plugs, sealed with lead, were plainly visible at *a*, *b*, and *c*. That is, some sort of sculpture adorned the pediment—a very unusual feature in the Ionic style.

There is one other thing to be spoken of; namely, the color decoration. A careful examination of the bed mould of this cornice revealed the fact that it had been decorated with a painted design. The pattern shown in Figure 8 had been carefully drawn on the moulding with a finely pointed tool. All traces of the actual colors had long since disappeared. I thought I could distinguish the pattern of a painted egg and dart on the nosing moulding, but this member was so weathered that the traces were very uncertain. Nor did

a careful examination of the rest of the temple disclose definite

traces of color decoration, although the mouldings of the architrave and parts of the capitals seemed to show in a few places slight suggestions of painted designs, a decoration which would be entirely consistent with that of other well-known buildings of the same period. The cyma, however, showed definite traces of a painted palmette, the actual design of which was too far gone to allow of a restoration. The axes only of the ornament were well marked (see Fig. 5).

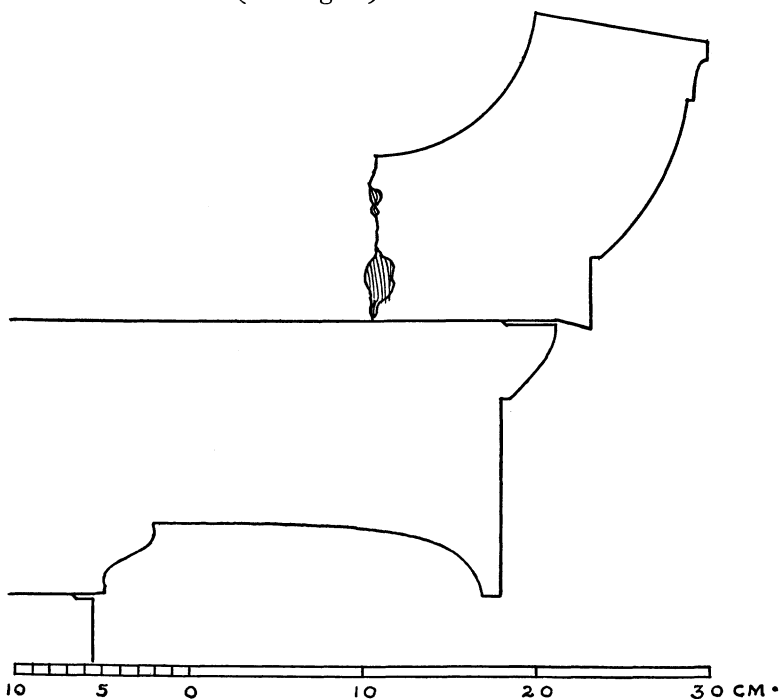


FIGURE 10. — DETAIL OF CORNICE AND CYMA.

In conclusion the reader's attention is called to Figure 9, where he may judge of the proportion of the cornice in relation to the whole order, and to Figure 10, which reproduces a detail of the cornice and cyma.

GORHAM P. STEVENS.

NEW YORK.